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Inside APHIS

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APHIS and the Capacity Building Grants Program: An Educational Partnership



APHIS PHOTO

Students at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff enroll in the first Regulatory Science degree program.

In this day and age, higher education, whether public or private, is taken for granted by many. Cost and acceptance are probably the two biggest hurdles students face in attending college; but most students live by the motto, where there's a will, there's a way. A little over a hundred years ago, however, this would not have been the case, especially in the South where not all citizens had equal access to colleges and universities. It wasn't until Congress passed the Second Morrill Act of 1890 and the Historically-Black Land-Grant institutions were established that all citizens had equal educational access. In fact, the Land-Grant institutions were created in direct response to the elitism and limited access the majority of citizens had to the private universities in this country. Their purpose was to

provide upper-level education for the masses—particularly in agriculture and the mechanical arts.

Since 1890, the 17 southeastern Land-Grant institutions have supplied most of America's college-trained black population and produced many of today's minority leaders in science, industry, education, medicine, government, and other professions. These institutions have made significant contributions in animal science, crop science, natural research, human health and nutrition, animal health, and rural development.

Prosperous Partnership

USDA's partnership with the Land-Grant institutions began in 1967 when the Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS) started providing low level funding for agricultural research to several of

the 1890 institutions. Over the years, this partnership has continued to flourish.

In 1988, the Secretary of Agriculture established the USDA-1890 Task Force to maintain and strengthen the Nation's agricultural enterprise. Then in 1990, the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program to Strengthen Teaching and Research Programs in the Food and Agriculture Sciences was developed. Administered by CSRS specifically for the 1890 institutions, the major goals of the program are to strengthen linkages between 1890 institutions, USDA, and private industry; advance cultural diversity of the food and agricultural sciences professional work force; and enhance the quality of teaching and research programs at the Land-Grant institutions.

"Through this program," says Carolyn Gethers, APHIS' Program Manager of Student Recruitment Programs, "USDA is striving to increase the hiring pool of minority and women students qualified for employment in the Department and help achieve USDA's affirmative action goals."

Of the total funds available for Capacity Building Programs, 45 percent is used to support teaching projects designed to increase the quality of and continuously renew the Nation's resident instruction programs in the food and agricultural sciences. Another 45 percent of the funding is used to support research projects which address high-priority research initiatives in areas where there is a present or anticipated need for increased knowledge or capabilities. The

(See CAPACITY BUILDING on page 4)

Sally McCammon Appointed APHIS Scientific Advisor

By Larry Mark, LPA

On Aug. 23, APHIS appointed its first Scientific Advisor—Sally McCammon. "This new position will greatly benefit APHIS," says Associate Administrator Lonnie King. "It will provide a strategic scientific focus on APHIS activities through evaluations, advice, and recommendations on a variety of policy and operation issues that have scientific and technical importance to the agency. And Sally McCammon brings excellent credentials with her to this position."

Before joining APHIS in 1988 as a biotechnologist in BBEP's Biotechnology Permit Unit, and later as a branch chief in the Biotechnology

Coordination and Technical Assistance division, McCammon worked for the Agricultural Research Service researching pathogenic plant bacteria.

McCammon is excited about her new role and sees it as one that will help coordinate the many issues that cut across various specialized responsibilities in APHIS. "I plan to encourage the interaction of APHIS employees and the scientific community," says McCammon. "Ultimately, this interaction will help communicate the sophisticated array of activities for which APHIS is responsible and, at the same time, gain the support of scientists in carrying out these activities."

According to McCammon, the most important thing she will be doing as Scientific Advisor is helping to maintain and expand APHIS' global leadership in applying science and technology to regulatory decisions.



APHIS PHOTO BY KEVIN CONNER

Sally McCammon, APHIS' newly appointed Scientific Advisor.

Letters to the Editor

To Inside APHIS:

REAC was recently involved in an animal confiscation in a remote area of West Virginia. During the course of the operation, PPQ and VS personnel provided REAC with much appreciated assistance.

Two endangered Syrian brown bears had been abandoned by an individual attempting to avoid an arrest warrant. Three days after the fact REAC representatives were notified of the situation and arrived on the scene. Regulatory Enforcement Investigators Renee Calvin and William Swartz as well as Animal Care Veterinary Medical Officer, Clara Robinson had the responsibility of seeing to the health and well-being of the bears. Joseph Messenio, the PPQ Officer in Charge in West Virginia, was also contacted for possible assistance. He made various resources available through his office, including a station vehicle to use during the operation. He also visited the site and brought food to the bears.

The animals' cages were filthy upon arrival and Francisco Collazo, VS' area Veterinarian-in-Charge in West Virginia, provided a spray rig to clean them. Harry Siers, VS' Animal Identification Coordinator in

West Virginia, delivered the spray rig to the site and assisted in the cleaning. He also helped load the bears in a transport vehicle for their subsequent move into a suitable location in another State. In addition, West Virginia's local law enforcement provided surveillance to ensure the bears' safety, and a local Kroger store donated produce to help feed the animals.

Although this incident attracted a great deal of local media attention, the entire operation was handled without a hitch. The successful conclusion of a complex operation of this nature is something for which APHIS should be proud. From the general public's perspective, APHIS fulfilled its obligation to the animals as well as the public interest we serve.

We, the individuals who make up APHIS, should feel a special sense of pride and accomplishment for a job well done and for the true spirit of cooperation and participation shown by several very diverse units and disciplines toward the accomplishment of a single and difficult goal. Outstanding!

Ron D. Stanley
Assistant Deputy Administrator
Regulatory Enforcement

Inside APHIS

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Secretarial Focus

Network Your Way to Success

By Linda Story, Program Manager, Operation Jumpstart

Networking is emerging as one of the most important concepts of professional effectiveness and advancement. The word "network" has become an integral part of our daily vocabulary and is repeatedly heard in offices throughout the country. But what is it really? And how do you do it?

Networking is a sharing experience. To work, it must be a give and take situation. As a secretary, one of the most rewarding privileges is the opportunity to advance both your own career and that of your supervisor through a variety of networking techniques.

Listed below are some networking skills that, if used appropriately, will help to increase your power, visibility, and career effectiveness:

1. Build on your personal contacts—people who are informative and willing to help. When

possible, each contact should lead to a new contact.

2. Read everything. Networking requires information and being informed is a key to networking success.

3. Keep a tracking system that organizes contacts, by name, category, phone number, address, and date.

4. Gain recognition for being a knowledgeable person within your organization. Develop a network of individuals in and out of your organization. Choose them because of what they know and by what you can teach them.

5. Join professional organizations and assume leadership roles in those organizations.

6. Seek out mentors—if possible, several throughout your career—to assure all career moves are covered.

7. Use your resources with discretion. Networking should be a joint venture and not manipulative.

8. Don't always expect a payoff. Be willing to share information without asking, "what's in it for me?"

9. Be trustworthy and keep confidences.

Work and Family Life Supervisor's Advisory Committee

By Ray Nosbaum, Work and Family Life Program Specialist, M&B

The Work and Family Life (WFL) council announces the establishment of the WFL Supervisor's Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to help supervisors respond to employees' need to balance work and family responsibilities, overcome perceived barriers that may prevent them from helping employees balance their work and family needs, obtain assistance where specific subject matter expertise may be needed, and reach mutually agreeable resolutions with their employees. Additionally, the committee will help supervisors make full use of the options described in the "Balancing Work and Family Life: The APHIS Approach" publication, which was distributed in Oct. 1992 to all agency work locations.

Once supervisors request the committee's services, they will be asked specific questions about their inquiry, and, after a preliminary assessment is conducted, the inquiry will be referred to a member of the committee based on their interests and abilities. The committee counselor will then advise the supervisor and help him or her obtain appropriate assistance from human resource specialists or employee assistance programs, follow the inquiry to resolution or termination, and obtain feedback from the supervisor on the quality of service.

Members of the committee include field managers, subject matter experts, and WFL council members. They have combined skills and knowledge in managing work units and employees so that the agency mission and production needs as well as employees' personal and family needs are met. Members also have skills in third party negotiations, performance and conduct rules and regulations, and labor relations.

Supervisors interested in using the committee's services should contact Ray Nosbaum, APHIS' Dependent and Family Care Specialist, at (301) 436-6658.

Showcase of Furniture for New Building



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

In October, the Headquarters Relocation Project Office (HRPO) staff held an open house in the Federal Building for APHIS employees to test and evaluate over 23 different kinds of chairs, check out the latest technology in video phones, and inspect various room designs for the new building. Here, Teresa Patterson from HRPO looks on as Jennifer Johnson (IS) and Donna DiTito (ISCD) watch a video on UNICOR furniture systems.

Capacity Building from page 1

remaining 10 percent is used to support teaching and/or research projects based on administrative decision.

Three Teaching Proposals Receive Funding

Although APHIS supported eight capacity building proposals to CSRS in Fiscal Year (FY) 1992, only three teaching proposals received funding with APHIS as cooperator. One of the accepted proposals is aimed at replenishing the shrinking pool of minorities in food and agricultural sciences by strengthening these areas at Tuskegee University in Alabama. The proposal encourages undergraduate students with an aptitude for the sciences to pursue advanced professional training in veterinary medicine and, among other things, provides students with financial assistance and revises the current curriculum to include the latest methodology and technology.

The second teaching proposal with which APHIS is involved is in conjunction with Lincoln University in Missouri. The project supports the office of professional development in assisting with student development, improving student retention, increasing enrollments, and increasing the number of minority students.

Regulatory Science Degree Offered for the First Time

The final proposal that received funding with APHIS as cooperator supports the Regulatory Science bachelor's degree program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff—the first degree program of its kind ever offered. This project builds on a three-year FY 1990 capacity building grant which addresses the need to attract ethnic minorities and socially and economically disadvantaged students to careers in food and agricultural sciences. "A major goal of this program," says Gethers, "is to

provide graduates with the body of knowledge and training needed for entry-level positions with regulatory and compliance agencies.

The Regulatory Science program consists of nine core courses covering various topics, such as oral and written communication, risk communication and assessment, management and analysis, natural and physical sciences, and administrative law. The curriculum is being offered by the university's School of Agriculture and Home Economics. A grant issued just last month, provides continued support for the program via scholarships, equipment, supplies and salary support.

Members of the USDA National Multi-Agency Regulatory Science Advisory Committee, which is chaired by Gethers and includes several APHIS employees, helped the university prepare lesson plans for the program's courses. APHIS committee members include Mike Lidsky of BBEP, Ed Imai of PPQ, John Kinsella of REAC, John Thaw of R&D, and Dan Hutchings of REAC.

"This is truly a great opportunity for APHIS," says Gethers. "Because the university's course work closely follows APHIS' areas of interest, graduates of the program could be hired by APHIS without needing to spend time and money training them in our methods. They will have advance knowledge about how regulatory agencies of USDA and other Federal agencies interact with regulated industries and how these industries implement Federal regulations. Graduates will also have a good idea of the intent of major regulatory activities, such as meat inspection, border control to keep out agricultural pests and diseases, and protection of animals under the Animal Welfare Act.

"This program will open up a variety of new training options for APHIS as well," continues Gethers. "In the future, APHIS could use the university as a training mechanism and send employees recruited from other sources to Arkansas for a condensed, 3-week training course in Regulatory Science."

This fall marked the start of the program's first classes, and the program is expected to expand considerably next year.

Turning Out Professionals



APHIS PHOTO

In July and August 1992, the ExCEL (Excellence through Competence, Experience, and Learning) program held one of three EXPERT (Excellent Performance through Training) program orientation sessions for APHIS office support staff. A total of 87 support staff employees from across the country attended the sessions and were tested for competency in a variety of clerical subject areas. Most of the employees attending the orientation also participated in one of four Career Assessment and Planning Workshops and plan to complete the rest of the EXPERT training in 1993. Kathryn Edgecomb, Renee Klund, Lori Anderson, Sonja Washington, and Kim Olson all took part in the orientation session in Park City, UT.

How Accessible are APHIS' Buildings To Individuals with Disabilities?

By Kendra Pratt, Public Information, LPA



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Joe Frick, APHIS' facility service manager, navigates the wheelchair ramps outside the Federal Building.

Joe Frick, acting Deputy Administrator for M&B, learned a valuable lesson recently while participating in a Department experiment. Knowing your limitations is the first step toward overcoming them.

Accepting a challenge from Charles Hilty, USDA Assistant Secretary for Administration, Frick agreed to experiment with different types of disabilities as part of a disability awareness training workshop to help understand problems and barriers employees with disabilities face. The workshop was scheduled to take place in the USDA Administration Building in Washington, DC, in conjunction with the kick-off of National Disability Awareness Month. USDA participants in the session included, among others, Assistant Secretary of Marketing and Inspection Services Jo Ann Smith and Director of Personnel Larry Slagle.

"Disabilities pose a difficult and constant challenge to everyday living that most people fail to realize," says Frick. "The workplace can pose barriers to disabled employees that often go unnoticed by

their supervisors and coworkers."

Putting the Federal Building to the Test

As the facility service manager for APHIS, Frick tested the accessibility of the Federal Building in Hyattsville to individuals with disabilities. He spent 2 days moving around the building in a manual wheelchair rolling over rugs, riding elevators, and opening doors to identify barriers caused by the Federal Building's structure. He also tested the accessibility of USDA's Administration Building in Washington, DC.

Because many parts of the Federal Building were recently renovated, Frick was able to get around in the wheelchair without too much of a struggle. He found the bathrooms and elevators to be accessible and was only slightly hindered by carpet stripping and doorways. He also praised the automated doors at the entrance of the building and in one of the bathrooms designed for the disabled. "A door can make the difference between a person in a wheelchair getting where they need to go

or being stuck," says Frick. "The heavier a door is, the harder it is for a disabled person to get through."

Frick found that one door he needed help in opening was the heavy, wooden door of his own office in Washington. He also found the elevators and bathrooms in the Federal Building to be more accessible than those in the Administration Building. "I gained an appreciation for how much extra time and energy it takes for a disabled individual to complete a task, whether it's going to a meeting or fixing the blinds," says Frick.

The time he spent in a wheelchair enabled Frick to learn a lot about both buildings' accessibility to individuals with disabilities, and he plans to have the engineers and architects in Hyattsville spend some time in a wheelchair to sensitize them to the needs of the disabled.

In addition to using a wheelchair, Frick also tried working with earplugs that simulated a hearing loss. He found that they made conversations difficult and the volume of his voice became louder because he was unable to hear himself. He also wore glasses that impaired his vision. "I already have a strong eyeglass prescription," says Frick, "but if I had impaired vision like those glasses, I would be reading and writing in braille."

Although he surprised many people by coming to work in a wheelchair, he found everyone in both buildings extremely helpful.

TARGET Center Established

To assist USDA managers, as well as current and prospective employees with disabilities locate, select, and evaluate devices and other forms of technology to help them function effectively in the work place, USDA has established a Technology Accessible Resources Give Employment Today (TARGET) Center. The Center opened Dec. 14 and is located in the USDA South Building in Washington. With the establishment of the TARGET Center, USDA hopes to provide disabled employees with the knowledge and assistance to help them overcome their potential limitations.

New York Animal Import Center: A Regular Animal Farm

By Beth Hulse, LPA



APHIS PHOTO BY BETH HULSE

Sharon Scheidhauer of LPA tries to coax some of the young ostriches quarantined at the Import Center to eat.

How do you coax an ostrich to eat? How do you monitor a horse for African Horse Sickness? How do you entertain a bored pig?

Obscure facts like these may look like they belong on the game show "Jeopardy," but to Jon Hansen, the supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer at VS' New York Animal Import Center, they are just part of everyday life.

The Center was built in 1980 in response to an increasing demand for facilities that could handle animal imports. Replacing the previous import center, which had operated since 1903 in Clifton, NJ, the Center is one of only three USDA-operated quarantine facilities for imported animals.

The Center's 17 buildings include an administration building, a service building, an incinerator, and 13 barns. Only the nondescript Government sign at the entryway lets visitors know that the 75-acre facility lies ahead.

Biosecurity Measures

The idea of mingling with potentially diseased animals may seem a little unsettling to some, but the Center enforces stringent biosec-

urity guidelines to prevent imported animals from transmitting diseases that could threaten U.S. animal populations.

All employees and visitors must suit up in government-issued coveralls and rubber galoshes. Chemical footbaths are stationed in each of the quarantine barns, and individuals must dip their shoes upon entering and leaving. Thorough showers must also be taken upon entering and leaving the facility and between some of the barns.

Animals R Us

The facility receives a constant influx of animals of all kinds. Everything from gazelles, horses, and breeding swine to parrots and ostriches are quarantined there.

On a particular day recently, the Center had quite a mixed bag of animals. A sheik's Arabian horses had returned from a race in the United Arab Emirates and were keeping two Australian thoroughbred racehorses company in the horse barn. They were being monitored for African horse sickness, which is usually signaled by a sharp rise in the horse's temperature. Gazelles and Barbary sheep imported by the

San Diego Zoo were undergoing quarantine in a nearby barn.

Birds are also frequent customers. Some arrive in crates no larger than a shoebox, while others are confiscated at airports from travelers trying to smuggle them into the country. The bird barn at the Center has rows of incubator-like isolettes for quarantining exotic and pet birds, such as cockatoos. These birds remain in the isolettes throughout all of their 30-day quarantine.

Ostriches demand more than the usual amount of attention from APHIS caretakers. Usually imported as young birds from Namibia, they are prone to stress and have trouble adjusting to life at the Import Center. To ensure the birds continue to eat, VS caretakers usually hand-feed them and will often dress up the food with lettuce or other fresh vegetables to entice them.

That day, the Center was also keeping an eye on a few hundred VIPs from England. No, they weren't the Royal Family; they were breeding swine (very important pigs) headed for North Carolina.

Pigs are intelligent animals, so employees of the Center try to keep them stimulated to reduce stress and limit their susceptibility to infections and disease. Contrary to public belief, pigs are very clean animals and enjoy bathing. On occasion, the caretakers squirt them with a garden hose, and watch them squeal with delight. The pigs also enjoy playing with a bowling ball—just another method used to make imported animals' stay as comfortable as possible while waiting out their quarantine.



APHIS PHOTO BY BETTE MERRILL

A Harpy Eagle is only one of many bird species quarantined at the Center.

W. Ron DeHaven, Western Sector Supervisor for Animal Care

By Kim Taylor, Executive Correspondence, LPA

Perhaps you've seen him being interviewed on "20/20" or "Good Morning America," calmly and reasonably explaining APHIS' position on a particularly explosive animal welfare case or maybe you've seen his name in the "Los Angeles Times" newspaper. Whatever the forum or however controversial the topic, W. Ron DeHaven, Animal Care's Western Sector Supervisor, adamantly sticks to his guns and stands behind APHIS.

DeHaven's office, like any other Animal Care office, must walk a delicate line between the animal industries APHIS regulates under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and Horse Protection Acts and the often vocal, ever watchful animal activist groups. DeHaven acknowledges the difficulties in maintaining this balancing act, but feels APHIS' message is getting across. "I think that, almost without exception, we are keeping sight of our primary goal—ensuring the humane care and treatment of the animals we regulate."

Spreading APHIS' Message

Because of the large number of highly visible animal welfare cases that originate within the Western Sector, a sizable amount of DeHaven's time is spent on public relations. "It's important for us to let the activist groups know that we are caring, concerned people who are doing our jobs right, but at the same time, that we are not over-regulating the industry," he says.

According to DeHaven, his public relations efforts appear to be paying off. "Some time ago we inspected the Los Angeles Zoo," he says to illustrate his point, "and 104 deficiencies and instances of noncompliance under the AWA were documented. Initially, the Zoo's top management ignored our requests that they comply with the AWA, but the 'Los Angeles Times' ran several articles relating APHIS' attempts to bring the Zoo into compliance with the AWA. As a result," he concludes, "Zoo authorities became quite cooperative in correcting their

deficiencies and problems."

DeHaven has also encountered his share of discouraging situations. "Probably one of the most frustrating aspects of this job is when we become aware of animal abuse and mishandling and don't have jurisdiction to do anything about it," he says. When this is the case, DeHaven's group can only provide information and enforcement assistance on an as needed basis.

"Our office works closely with all of the State Fish and Wildlife organizations in our Sector as well as with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS)," he elaborates. "In fact, FWS and NMFS often request that we inspect facilities for compliance with the AWA standards before issuing a permit. In return, when we become aware of illegal interstate movements of endangered species, such as exotic cats, and FWS has jurisdiction, we will notify them."

The Making of a Leader

Working for the Federal Government is far from what DeHaven envisioned himself doing as a veterinary medical student at Purdue University. After finishing school on an ROTC scholarship and serving 4 years with the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps, DeHaven intended to become a small animal practitioner. However, economic factors, the pressures of a growing family, and a lot of interaction with Gary Church, a local VS Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO), influenced DeHaven's decision to join APHIS in 1979 as a field VMO in Kentucky, which at the time was undergoing a brucellosis epidemic of major proportions.

In 1985, DeHaven moved yet again to Jackson, MS, and into an Assistant Area Veterinarian-in-Charge position. At that time, Animal Care was still a part of VS and DeHaven was named the State Animal Care coordinator as well. Then, after three years and the establishment of REAC, he moved a final time in 1989 to his current position in Sacramento.



APHIS PHOTO

REAC's Western Sector Supervisor Ron W. DeHaven.

His first few months as head of the Western Sector's budding Animal Care unit can probably best be described as a trial by fire. "The Bobby Berosini story had just broken on the television show 'Entertainment Tonight,'" he explains, "and because of the national media attention it received, there was absolute chaos in our office. Mobile news units were set up everywhere, and they were constantly contacting us with questions. At the time, it seemed like all eyes were looking at us," he says.

APHIS subsequently investigated the allegations that Berosini was abusing the orangutans he used in his Las Vegas nightclub act and found no substantive evidence to support the charges.

Future Predictions

What does DeHaven think the future has in store for Animal Care? "Well, I don't see any decline in the intense public interest in animal welfare issues," he says. "I think it will continue to increase during this decade to the extent that our regulatory authorities will probably be expanded." He sees rats, mice, and birds as the first group that may be included in future actions, possibly to be followed by farm animals but acknowledges that the inclusion of any of these animals under the AWA would be a dramatic step.

Whatever changes may lie around the corner, it is reassuring to know that Ron DeHaven and his staff will be there, approaching regulatory procedures and problems in a decidedly nonbureaucratic way and, in the process, effectively spreading APHIS' message.

Portugal Ostrich Farm Gets Thumbs Up From APHIS

By Tom Cramer, Operations Support, VS



APHIS PHOTO BY TRACYE BUTLER-REID

Tracye Butler-Reid and ostrich farm owner, Wolfgang Delfs, stand amidst a group of his 4 to 5-month-old ostriches.

"I had heard that adult male ostriches' legs turn bright red during mating season, and it's true," says Tracye Butler-Reid, a staff veterinarian with APHIS' Import-Export National Center. During a trip she took to Portugal in September to inspect an ostrich farm northeast of Lisbon, Butler-Reid was also struck by the birds' reaction to the intense heat there. "They pant just like dogs to stay cool except their tongues don't hang out of their mouths," she explains.

The ostrich industry has grown tremendously in this country in recent years as has the importation of these birds. Because of the potential for ostriches to carry ticks and diseases foreign to the United States, only ostrich eggs and chicks weighing 30 pounds or less and under 3 feet tall can be imported into this country. Even then, the chicks must undergo quarantine at APHIS' facility in Newburgh, NY, or Miami, FL, and the eggs must be quarantined at a private USDA-approved facility before being allowed to enter. To further guard against the introduction of foreign pests and diseases, APHIS inspects all export facilities to ensure they meet our export standards.

Checking for Compliance

The purpose of Butler-Reid's trip was to verify that the Lisbon facility had installed a double fence at least 10 feet apart with no surrounding vegetation to prevent the ostriches from getting ticks. She also took a general inventory of the birds at the facility and checked to see that they were kept separate from all other animals on the property.

According to Butler-Reid, the farm's fencing does more than just keep out ticks. Heavy-gauge hog fencing wire is used for both the primary and secondary fences on the farm, and barbed wire is used on the perimeter fence. "They do this not so much to keep the ostriches in or wildlife out, but to keep people from sneaking in and stealing eggs," she says. "They had a chronic theft problem before installing the barbed wire. People weren't stealing eggs to make giant omelets, either. Importers are willing to pay as much as \$500 for one fertile ostrich egg."

Anatomy of an Ostrich Farm

According to Butler-Reid, the farm she inspected had about 130 breeding-age birds and about 50 young ones. "The habitat for the adult birds is dry, hilly land that's

fairly barren, except for cork trees, which provide shade for the birds," she says. "Portugal is the world's number-one producer of cork, and the farm had cork trees everywhere."

"The barrenness of the land makes it easy to find the ostriches' eggs," she continues. "During the past year, 1,600 eggs were collected on the farm but only about 800 hatched. The average ostrich produces 40 to 60 eggs a year, and there is some concern about the 50-percent failure rate of hatchings. It's thought that the incubation set-up might be the cause, and the owners are taking a closer look at the incubation process," she says.

Inspecting the entire ostrich farm, including the hatchery, egg-washing facilities, and incubation building took Butler-Reid quite some time—the breeding area alone was about 150 acres.

Since receiving APHIS' approval, which Butler-Reid assures was the case, the farm is now the only one in Portugal currently exporting ostrich chicks and eggs to the United States.



APHIS PHOTO BY TRACYE BUTLER-REID

Here, a South African Black Ostrich about 6 feet tall poses for the camera.

She Certainly Knows Her Bulbs

By Amichai Heppner,
Public Information, LPA

"Irregularities are what we look for," says Carolyn Cohen, Assistant Officer in Charge of IS' Hillegom work unit in the Netherlands and inspector for the import preclearance program, while thumbing a soft spot on a tulip bulb. "Not all deformities mean pests or disease, but they put you on the track of trouble."

Cohen, after 2 years in this position, has become a veteran at identifying bad bulbs. "That's a reject," she states, pointing to the bulb still in her hand. "But one reject doesn't mean an entire shipment is barred from the United States. Some lots can be rehabilitated. For instance, lots found to be coated with excessive soil could be rewashed and approved during reinspection. They also could be shipped to countries that have no restrictions for soil or used as planting stock."

Bulbs are big business in the Netherlands, and many groups share the responsibility of assuring that only bulbs of the highest quality are exported. After the exporter's own staff conducts a thorough quality check of the bulbs, the Dutch Plantenziektenkundige Dienst, or Plant Disease Service, looks over each lot of bulbs. The final inspection is conducted by a team made up of, at the minimum, one Dutch official and one APHIS inspector. Although APHIS has the final say on whether bulbs are suitable for export to the United States, all decisions are made jointly. "In fact, my counterparts regularly reject bulbs that they know don't meet our standards," says Cohen.

In return for inspection services, the Bond van Bloembollenhandelaars, the Bulb Exporters' Association of the Netherlands, reimburses APHIS for Cohen's salary as well as that of her coworkers and any allowances and expenses involved in operating the Hillegom work unit. Similarly, any work APHIS inspectors conduct in other countries is reimbursed by those countries' exporter associations. Cohen and a coworker alternate inspecting bulb warehouses in Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, Turkey, and Israel.



APHIS PHOTO BY AMICHA HEPPNER

Carolyn Cohen carefully examines flower bulbs to be exported to the United States for irregularities to prevent the introduction of pests or disease.

From July to September, Cohen's schedule is mostly dominated with inspections of spring-blooming bulbs to be exported from the Netherlands. Although two or three inspection teams can handle up to 15 warehouses each on a busy day, the travel time involved often slows them down to only five a day.

Warehouses are not the only place Cohen inspects for plant pests and diseases. "In spring, we are busy conducting field inspections in all of the countries that participate in the preclearance program for bulbs. We go out into the fields to look for viruses, nematodes and other problems that are only evident on the plants and in the ground," says Cohen.

Although she always wears gloves when inspecting bulbs, Cohen doesn't want anyone to think she's afraid of getting her hands dirty. "We wear gloves for protection," she says. "There are small bristles at the top of tulip bulbs that can cause an irritation and make the skin on our fingertips separate from the nails. Other bulbs, like hyacinths, are worse. They have irritating fibers that can make you itch all over."

"One of the benefits of the job," says Cohen, "is that I'm knee deep in pink tulip blossoms one day and strolling through a field of fragrant yellow narcissus the next."

APHIS Plays Santa for Van Ness Elementary School Students

In the spirit of the Holidays, APHIS employees once again dug into their pockets to help children at the Van Ness Elementary School have a Merry Christmas. APHIS was able to donate a treeful of mittens, hats, and scarfs and 19 bags of assorted toys and clothes in addition to \$661. Of the money donated, \$422 of it was raised by an ISCD bake sale. USDA is associated with Van Ness through the Partners in Education program and provides special programs, activities, and field trips for the students and has organized a tutoring program. In a note to APHIS employees, Assistant Secretary Smith commended APHIS' Christmas fundraising efforts and stated that "it has been a privilege to work with such a fine group of people."

All Around APHIS

National Veterinary Accreditation Program Established—On Nov. 23, APHIS changed its veterinary accreditation regulations to replace accreditation at the State level with a uniform national program. Under the new system, accredited veterinarians will be allowed to perform Federal veterinary services in any State in which they are licensed to practice. Applicants also will be required to undergo a comprehensive evaluation of their ability to perform standard veterinary procedures and attend an approved orientation program covering

Federal animal health laws and regulations as well as ethical and professional responsibilities of accredited veterinarians.

Voice Response Service—The VS Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health has improved its voice response service, which allows veterinarians, livestock officials, dealers, exhibitors, carriers, and intermediate handlers to obtain information from the State Regulations Retrieval System on a 24-hour basis, 365 days a year, including holidays. By dialing 1-800-545-

USDA (8732) from a Touch Tone phone, callers can be connected to the service. In addition to expanded menu selections that include transportation requirements for dogs and cats, a recorded human voice is now used instead of a computer-synthesized voice, and the caller may leave a message about the service in a phone message mailbox.

Protecting Endangered Turtles—ADC specialists are assisting with a crow control program to protect the endangered Alabama red-bellied turtle. The turtle's nesting habitat is limited to a few sand islands on the gulf coast where predation by fish crows is extremely high. ADC provided specific recommendations for crow control that were discussed with representatives of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Auburn University.

New Strain of Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly)—APHIS and representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the MOSCAMED (Spanish for Medfly) program met in Guatemala to determine the feasibility of testing a newly developed strain of sterile Medfly, a temperature-sensitive lethal female mutant, which can be easily eliminated in the egg stage of the rearing process. This strain may be cheaper to produce and more effective in the field. APHIS will prepare an action and financial plan on this pilot test for the Agricultural Research Service's review.

Imported Fire Ants—Effective Feb. 1, APHIS will no longer approve the use of granular chlorpyrifos (DURSBAN) in the imported fire-ant-free nursery program because of its inability to provide a safeguard against fire ants for a sufficient length of time using the current application methods. Nurserymen participating in the program must use bifenthrin (TALSTAR) in all potting media mixed after Jan. 31. APHIS initially announced this treatment change in June 1992 to give growers time to use their existing supplies of granular chlorpyrifos.

VS Lottery Causes Ostrichmania



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Used to be the only place you'd see an ostrich was at the zoo. Today, ostriches and ostrich eggs are a hot commodity—a healthy ostrich chick will sell for anywhere between \$2,500 and \$3,000—and breeding farms are popping up across the country. Previously desired only for their feathers and leather, ostriches are now in demand for their meat, which is similar to beef in taste but contains very little fat and cholesterol. To accommodate the growing demand for these birds, APHIS selected by lottery 13 new private bird import and quarantine stations on Nov. 17 for ostrich birds and

hatching eggs. VS' Import-Export National Center received a staggering 20,000 applications to open such stations, which caused the lottery to be postponed for more than a month to allow the applications to be properly processed. The newly approved stations will be in Florida, New Jersey, Arizona, and Texas. VS employees R.L. Rissler and Tom Cramer from the Operational Support Staff and Robert Whiting and Keith Hand from the Import-Export National Center help sift through the boxes of applications received for the lottery.

APHIS Reporter

The following summaries are media reports on APHIS and APHIS-related topics from December. For further information, call LPA's Public Information staff at FTS (301) 436-7799.

According to a Dec. 3 article in *USA Today*, a **rabies emergency** has been declared in Starr County, TX. This year, the county has had 11 animals come down with rabies--six of which occurred in November.

Business Week ran an article on Dec. 14 about the ongoing debate regarding **food developed through biotechnology**. It discussed whether these foods are considered to be safe and whether they have potential for Third World countries.

According to *Food and Chemical News*, the Food and Drug Administration has issued guidelines to support APHIS' regulations on **bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)**, which limit the importation of meat products from countries where outbreaks of BSE have occurred.

The *New York Times*, *Washington Times*, *USA Today*, and *Wall Street Journal* all ran articles announcing

the signing of the **North American Free Trade Agreement** by President Bush, Mexico's President Salinas, and Canada's Prime Minister Mulroney. The accord must still be approved by the legislatures of all three nations before going into effect.

Tree-killing **avocado mites** have turned up on 10,000 acres in San Diego County, CA, and are threatening the area's \$132 million crop reported an article in *USA Today*. Little is known about the Central American pests.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports

that the Environmental Protection Agency has sent a proposal to the Office of Management and Budget to ban the use of the pesticide **methyl bromide**. Any action on the proposal is expected to be postponed until the Clinton Administration takes office.

Evidence indicates that insects are rapidly becoming resistant to the natural toxins produced by **Bacillus thuringiensis** reported the *New York Times*. However, scientists are examining ways to prevent the build up of resistant insects.

APHIS Recruits Students at AISES National Conference

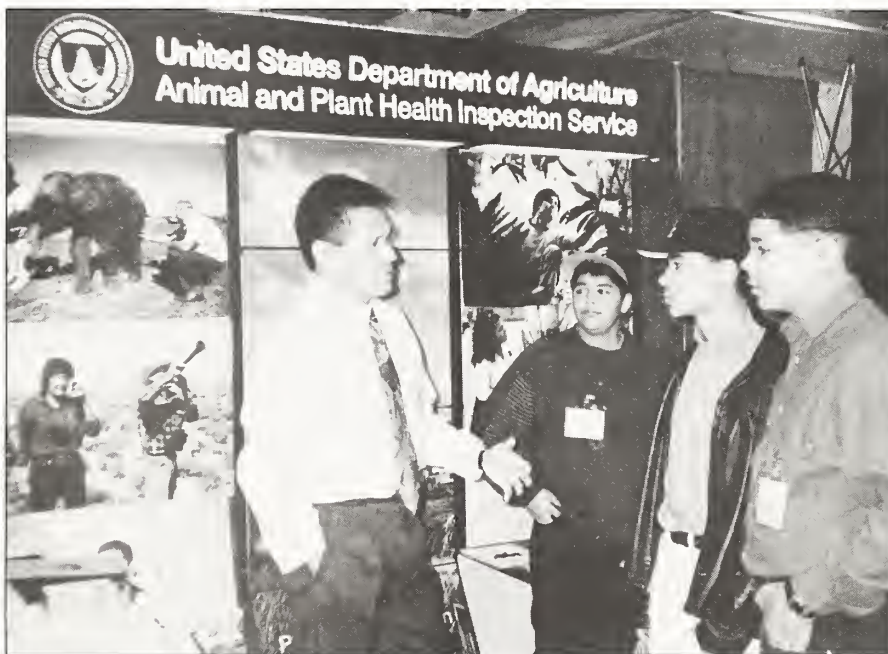


PHOTO BY ALICIA RODRIGUEZ

Coming Attractions

Keep an eye out for these topics in the next issue of "Inside APHIS": a focus on PPG's Deputy Administrator Glen Lee • the Women's Advisory Committee's new appointees • Charlie Dents, VMO in Puerto Rico • and Workforce Diversity.

Also . . . We want to know what you think about "Inside APHIS." What do you like or dislike about the newsletter? Are the articles timely? What would you like to see included? Any and all suggestions are welcome. Please fax, mail, or call in your suggestions. The address and phone number can be found on page 2, and our fax number is (301) 436-5941.

APHIS was one of over 144 private and public sponsors and exhibitors at the American Indian Science and Engineering Society's (AISES) 14th Annual National Conference held in Crystal City, VA, from Nov. 5th through the 8th. AISES is a private nonprofit organization which seeks to increase the number of American Indian scientists and engineers in the nation as well as develop technologically informed leaders

within the Indian community. Several APHIS employees from R&D manned an exhibit at the conference and discussed opportunities for employment within APHIS with students, teachers, and guidance counselors from across the country. Here, Steve Robinson, from VS' Arizona office, who is also Hopi Indian, talks to some students about APHIS.

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